



27 February 2009

The Honorable Ip Kwok-him
Chairman of the Joint Subcommittee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Ip

***Re: Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development – Joint Subcommittee to
Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project***

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the development of WKCD. Much has been said already about the need to develop human software to ensure the self-sustainability of WKCD. In this association's view, the AAA wishes to stress the importance of staff development in advance of the opening of WKCD. In a few years time there will be a need for experienced arts administrators in large numbers and across a wide variety of disciplines to ensure that its arts venues operate at the high standards of presentation and operational effectiveness one expects to find in a world class cultural district.

We urge the Authority to take a pro-active role and not simply expect the labour market to provide the required number of people with the required skill sets in each arts / events management discipline as and when they are needed. There are simply not enough arts administrators in Hong Kong to fill the demand. If, in satisfying the needs of WKCD, existing organization are depleted of their best and brightest, or are forced into unequal competition to retain their staff, then the whole situation would be counter productive, and have knock-on negative impact on the success of WKCD.

Training arts managers in such numbers takes time, and fortunately there is still time if the Authority starts now. It should be providing funds for staff development across the range of disciplines that it hopes to recruit, and while it may not initially have the internal infrastructure to manage such programmes, in the short term it can partner



with other agencies such as the HK Arts Development Council to facilitate internships at Hong Kong's existing professional arts organisations and to fund manager-level staff exchange between those organizations and other major performance centres around the world.

In such exercises, the AAA also earnestly asks that the resources of organizations from which these trainees may be drawn must also be safeguarded. For example, the ADC is currently inviting applications to the CLORE Fellowship programme. The difficulty will be for the employing organization to function without a key member of mid to senior level staff for six months, with no resources to employ additional help to cover these duties. The AAA urges that other such initiatives be thought through in comprehensive manner, and stands ready and willing to provide advice on a range of staff development programmes that the Authority should support.

Yours Sincerely

Tisa Ho

Chairman